

Serial No.: 10/658,080
Attorney Docket No.: NEW10-GN005(39307)
Amendment

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

[0035] Mounted on the outer cylinder 44 is a first grip 50. The first grip 50 can have an ergonomic design such that the user is able to easily grip the first handle section to thereby abate hand fatigue. The first grip 50 can be manufactured from a material that is comfortable to hold, such as Santoprene.RTM.. A butt cap 52 can be mounted to the proximal end 28 of the outer cylinder 44 to conceal the mechanics of the paint applicator 20. Air relief holes can be included in the butt cap to allow air to escape from inside the paint applicator 20. A locking hole 54 can be disposed in the outer cylinder 44 to accommodate a locking pin 56, as will be described later.

[0037] Mounted on the distal end 30 of the inner cylinder 58 is a second grip 60. The second grip 60 can also have an ergonomic design such that the user is easily able to grip the second handle section 24 and reduce hand fatigue as with the first grip 50. The second grip 60 can be manufactured from a material that is comfortable to hold, such as Santoprene.RTM.. The second grip 60 can extend around the distal end 28 of the inner cylinder 58 and form an opening 61 through which the implement section 26 can slide. The opening can be sized to ensure that no paint enters the inside of the paint applicator 20, or can include a wiper or a scraper.

[0038] A sleeve bearing 63 can be disposed on the distal end 28 between the outer cylinder 48 and the inner cylinder 58. The sleeve bearing 63 ensures that no paint or other debris can enter the gap between the outer cylinder 48 and the inner cylinder 58, while allowing the inner cylinder 58 and the outer cylinder 48 to slide relative to one another.

[0042] Slidably disposed within the hollow core of the inner cylinder 58 is the implement section 26. Affixed to the distal end 30 of the main leg 32 of the implement section 26 is a mounting block 80. The mounting block 80 generally can have a cross section similar to

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the hollow core of the inner cylinder 58 such that the mounting block 80 can slide smoothly within the inner cylinder 58.

[0043] An advancement strip 82 is affixed to the distal end 30 of the inner surface 48 of the outer cylinder 44 at its first end 84. The advancement strip 82 is disposed along the inner surface 48 of the outer cylinder 44 from the distal end 30 towards the proximal end 28. It travels through the curved channel 76 and back towards the distal end 30. The advancement strip 82 is affixed on its second end 86 to the mounting block 80. The advancement strip 82 can be affixed on its ends 84, 86 by riveting, bonding, screwing, or other ways known in the art.

[0047] To move the paint applicator 20 into the second position, the user can pull the locking pin 56 from the receiver hole 62 to allow relative motion between the outer cylinder 58 and the inner cylinder 44. The user can then grasp the second grip 60 and the first grip 50 and pull the second handle section 24 distally away from the first handle section 22. The inner cylinder 58 and the guide block 66 are pulled distally relative to the outer cylinder 44. As the guide block 66 is moved towards the distal end 30 of the outer cylinder 44, the advancement strip 82 is forced against the pushing surface 70 of the curved channel 76 and is pushed through the curved channel 76 along the pushing surface 70 such that the advancement strip 82 is forced distally away from the user. Due to its resistance to buckling, the advancement strip 82 pushes the implement section 26 distally through the inner cylinder 58 as it moves through the curved channel 76.

[0051] A spring 94 is disposed inside the paint applicator 20, with a first end 96 being attached at the distal end 30 of the inner cylinder 58, and a second end 98 being attached at the proximal end 28 of the implement section 26. The spring 94 can bias the paint applicator 20 in either the extended or retracted position, depending on user preference or application. A dampener could also be included to control the force of the spring 94. Other mechanisms will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art to bias the paint applicator 20 in either of the positions.

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[0052] Referring now to FIGS. 22 and 23, another alternative example is shown. In this example, walls 100, 102 are constructed to surround the advancement strip 82 along its full length of travel. A first set of walls 100 extend inward from the inner surface 48 of the outer cylinder 44. The advancement tape 82 is captured by the outer surface 61 of the inner cylinder 58. A second set of walls 102 extend inward from the inner surface 96 of the implement section 28. The second set of walls 102 include fingers 104 that reach over the top of the advancement tape 82 to capture the advancement tape 82. An advancement strip 82 can thereby be used that is less resistant to buckling, because the walls 100, 102 support and prevent the advancement strip 82 from buckling. In this example, the advancement strip 82 can be made from plastic, wire, etc.

[0053] In a further alternative example, shown in FIG. 24, rolling element bearings 103 104 can be implemented on the pushing surface 70 of the guide block 66 to reduce friction between the pushing surface 70 and the advancement strip 82.

[0068] While such a connection mechanism 247 may be conventional, the shape and form of the tooth 256 is not. As opposed to prior art devices which use cylindrical teeth, it will be noted that the tooth 256 is substantially conical or frustoconical in shape having a cylindrical base 262 from which a frustoconical section 264 extends. In addition, the apertures 258 provided within the inner tube 244 include chamfered, canted, or tapered side walls 265 so as to be complementary to, or congruent with, the frustoconical shape of the tooth 256. Accordingly, as shown best in FIG. 18 17, when the tooth 256 is secured within one of the apertures 258, it is tightly or snugly received therein, thus removing or alleviating any slop or play associated with prior art securement devices. The resulting assembly 220 is therefore more rigid and reliably holds its dimension and attached tool, thus improving performance and user satisfaction.

[0074] Referring now to FIGS. 15-17, an alternative connector 400 for quickly attaching a painting accessory to an extension pole is shown in further detail. The connector 400,

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more specifically, may include a housing 402 adapted to be mounted onto a distal end 404 of an extension pole inner tube 406. The housing 402 may include a substantially cylindrical outer shell 408 having a first end 410 of a diameter slightly greater than the distal end 404 of the inner tube 406. Accordingly, the first end 410 can be slid over the distal end 404 and be frictionally engaged thereto. The mounting of the housing 402 onto the distal end 404 can be further enhanced by the use of adhesive or the like. As shown best in FIG. 16 6, the housing 402 may further include an interior stop 412 to provide a positive surface against which the distal end 404 can be secured.